

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-03

NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 PA-01 PRS-01 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 DHA-02 A-01 PER-01 /049 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/INS:DKUX:USIA/INA:CSNOW:MMK

APPROVED BY P:M,, SISCO

USIA - MR. KEOUGH

NEA:ALATHERTON

S/S-O: MMTANNER

THE SECRETARY

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 175590

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IN, US

SUBJECT: VOA CORRESPONDENT: GUIDELINES

REFS: (A) NEW DELHI 9905

JOINT STATE-USIA MESSAGE

1. WE HAVE CONSIDERED REF MESSAGE IN THE CONTEXT OF OUR FOREIGN POLICY AND INFORMATION POLICY INTERESTS AND HAVE DEVELOPED THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES RE VOA CORRESPONDENT IN DELHI:

A. IF ASKED TO DO SO, MILLER SHOULD REFUSE TO SIGN PLEDGE TO COMPLY WITH CENSORSHIP REGULATIONS AND SHOULD NOT IN FUTURE AGREE TO SUBMIT TO ANY RESTRICTIONS GOI MIGHT ATTEMPT TO IMPOSE ON HIS REPORTING.

B. MILLER SHOULD CONTINUE TO REPORT DEVELOPMENTS FULLY
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AND ACCURATELY.

C. IF VOA LOCAL EMPLOYEE, HARI KAPOOR, FACES THREATS OF ARREST OR OTHER IRRESISTIBLE PRESSURE FOR NOT SIGNING THE PLEDGE, HE SHOULD BE PLACED ON ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE OR, AT THE EXTREME, CAN BE CONSIDERED FOR IMMEDIATE TDY IN WASHINGTON WITH IBS/PM.

2. IF IN THE AMBASSADOR'S JUDGEMENT, THE SITUATION IS BECOMING UNTENABLE, AND MILLER'S EXPULSION SEEMS LIKELY, WE WANT TO AVOID OFFICIAL CONFRONTATION WITH GOI, ESPECIALLY AS MILLER HAS DIPLOMATIC STATUS, AND PREFER TO WITHDRAW HIM VOLUNTARILY FROM INDIA, I.E., THE COURSE WHICH THE BBC HAS CHOSEN TO FOLLOW.

3. IF THIS BECOMES NECESSARY, VOA WOULD THEN ISSUE STATEMENT HERE ALONG FOLLOWING LINES: QUOTE: THE VOA IS WITHDRAWING ITS CORRESPONDENT, JIM MILLER FROM NEW DELHI. MR. MILLER, LIKE THE OTHER FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS IN INDIA, WAS ASKED TO SIGN A PLEDGE TO ABIDE BY THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT'S CENSORSHIP REGULATIONS. AS A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE, THE VOA CANNOT CONDONE OR WILL IT ACCEPT PRESS CENSORSHIP. UNQUOTE.

4. WE RECOGNIZE GOI WILL BE UNHAPPY, BUT IF THEY ESTABLISH GROUND RULES WHICH DO NOT ENABLE CORRESPONDENTS TO FUNCTION NORMALLY, THEY OFFER US LITTLE CHOICE. KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: EXPULSION, DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL, JOURNALISTS, BRIEFING MATERIALS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 JUL 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE175590
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: DKUX:USIA/INA:CSNOW:MMK
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750256-0358
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750721/aaaaaskg.tel
Line Count: 87
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 NEW DELHI 9905
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 AUG 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <01 DEC 2003 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: VOA CORRESPONDENT: GUIDELINES
TAGS: PFOR, IN, US, VOA, (MILLER, JAMES B)
To: NEW DELHI
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006